

CC Docket 98-67



Family Services Woodfield

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Federal Communications Commission
K. Dane Snowden
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Complaints
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Snowden,

Family Services Woodfield is the largest provider of services to the Deaf and hard of hearing communities in Connecticut. We serve over 2000 Deaf and hard of hearing consumers annually, providing counseling, case management and Sign Language interpretation.

The recent addition of Video Relay Services (VRS) to Relay Connecticut has been a godsend to many of our clients. The ability to communicate over the phone in their native language has increased the independence of countless individuals. Clear communication with their workplace, landlord, family, and community has afforded the people we serve more productive and satisfying lives. FCC support for VRS has been crucial in the availability of this most successful service.

We were surprised to learn that the FCC has ordered a cut in the reimbursement rate for VRS by almost 50%. We can't help but think that this will result in a lower quality, less available service. Sign Language Interpreters are a limited resource. A significant cut in reimbursement can only result in lower quality interpreters. We know this from over 20 years experience. Interpreters without the skill and experience to interpret for any caller will make the service inaccessible to a significant number of current users.

We ask that the FCC immediately reconsider its recent order on reimbursable VRS rate. Order DA 03-211, must be reconsidered before it has a catastrophic effect on VRS and its users.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Carter
Director
Deaf Outreach Services

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